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LETTER DATED 18 DECEMBER 1998 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF GEORGIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

Upon instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of the statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia regarding the imminent deterioration of the situation in Abkhazia, Georgia.

May I ask your kind assistance in having the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Peter CHKHEIDZE
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

98-39949 (E) 181298

Annex

Statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia
issued in Tblisi on 17 December 1998

According to information that has come to the attention of the Government of Georgia, armed groups of ethnic Abkhazians and mercenaries are being concentrated in the territory of the Gali region, where part of the Georgian population is still residing.

The present action is being carried out by the separatist regime, ostensibly as a measure against the bandit formations in the Gali region, but as a matter of fact its true purpose is to expel the remaining Georgian population from their homes and, in case of resistance, to carry out their brutal extermination.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia states that the Government of Georgia will not allow another bloodbath of the Georgian population. To this end, the units of the Ministry of State Security and of the Ministry of Internal Affairs deployed in the region are put on extreme alert. They are ordered to duly respond to any provocation and to defend the peaceful population.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia appeals to the military leadership of the Commonwealth of Independent States peacekeeping forces to take all measures for the prevention of new bloodshed and not to become a blind weapon of this adventurist intention.

At a time when the peace process is gaining momentum and when peace negotiations are presently under way in Geneva, it is clearly evident that the preparations of the Abkhaz side are aimed at the obstruction of the peace process and at triggering a new tide of refugees and displaced persons.